

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows.

1. (Currently Amended) A process to prepare a base oil having a viscosity index of between 80 and 140 starting with a feedstock that having at least 200 ppm sulfur and is either a distillate or a de-asphalting oil by, wherein said process comprises:

(a) contacting the feedstock in the presence of hydrogen with a sulphided, non-fluorided hydrodesulphurisation catalyst, comprising between 2-10 wt% nickel, and between 5-30 wt% tungsten, on an acid amorphous silica-alumina carrier, up to 8 wt% large pore molecular sieve and alumina in an amount in the range of from 5 to 75 % by weight calculated on the carrier alone, and wherein the sulphided, non-fluorided hydrodesulphurisation catalyst has a surface area between 200 and 300 m²/g, a total pore volume above 0.4 ml/g, and between 5 and 40 volume percent of its total pore volume present as pores having a diameter of more than 350 Å, to thereby provide an effluent; and

(b) performing a pour point reducing step on the effluent of step (a) to obtain the base oil.

2. (Previously Presented) The process according to claim 1, wherein the sulphided hydrodesulphurisation catalyst has a hydrodesulphurisation activity of higher than 30%, wherein the hydrodesulphurisation activity is expressed as the yield in weight percentage of C₄-hydrocarbon cracking products when thiophene is contacted with the catalyst under standard hydrodesulphurisation conditions, wherein the standard conditions consist of contacting a hydrogen-thiophene mixture with 200 mg of a 30-80 mesh catalyst at 1 bar and 350 °C, wherein the hydrogen rate is 54 ml/min and the thiophene concentration is 6 vol% in the mixture.

Claim 3 (Canceled).

4. (Currently Amended) The process according to claim 32, wherein the sulphided, non-fluorided hydrodesulphurisation catalyst is obtained in a process wherein the nickel and the

tungsten ~~where~~ are impregnated on the acid amorphous silica-alumina carrier in the presence of a chelating agent.

5. (Currently Amended) The process according to claim 4, wherein the alumina content of the sulphided, non-fluoridized hydrodesulphurisation catalyst is between 10 and 60 wt% as calculated on the carrier alone.

6. (Previously Presented) The process according to claim 5, wherein the silica-alumina carrier has an n-heptane cracking test value of between 310 and 360 °C, wherein the cracking test value is obtained by measuring the temperature at which 40 wt% of n-heptane is converted when contacted, under standard test conditions, with a catalyst consisting of said carrier and 0.4 wt% platinum.

7. (Previously Presented) The process according to claim 6, wherein the silica-alumina carrier has an n-heptane cracking test value of between 320 and 350 °C.

Claims 8-11 (Canceled).

12. (Currently Amended) The process according to claim ~~11~~⁷, wherein the feedstock in step (a) contains more than 700 ppm sulphur.

13. (Currently Amended) The process according to claim 12, wherein the feedstock to step (a) is first subjected to a hydrodesulphurisation step prior to the contacting using the feed in step (a) when preparing a base oil having a viscosity index of greater than 120.

14. (Currently Amended) The process according to claim 13, wherein the catalyst in step (a) comprises between 0.1 and 8 wt% of ~~a~~ the large pore molecular sieve.

15. (Currently Amended) The process according to claim 14, wherein the large pore molecular sieve is zeolite Y, ultrastable zeolite Y, ZSM-12, zeolite beta or mordenite molecular sieve.

16. (Previously Presented) The process according to claim 15, wherein step (b) is performed by means of solvent dewaxing.

17. (Previously Presented) The process according to claim 15, wherein step (b) is performed by means of catalytic dewaxing.

18. (Previously Presented) The process according to claim 17, wherein the dewaxing catalyst is selected from the group consisting of a catalyst composition A comprising a silica bound and dealuminated Pt/ZSM-12, a catalyst composition B comprising a silica bound and dealuminated Pt/ZSM-22, and a catalyst composition C comprising a silica bound and dealuminated Pt/ZSM-23.

19. (Previously Presented) The process according to claim 18, wherein the dewaxing catalyst is a silica bound and dealuminated Pt/ZSM-12.